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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 62nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VAHER (Canada)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Vaher (Canada), took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision contained in document A/44/48 under agenda item 82 (f) (United Nation Conference on Environment and Development) (A/C.5/44/54)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its 91st plenary meeting, the General Assembly had decided to resume consideration of agenda item 82 (f), "Development and international economic co-operation: environment", in conformity with paragraph 3 of document A/44/903.

2. At its current session, the Fifth Committee would consider the programme budget implications of the draft decision recommended by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in paragraph 55 of its report (A/44/48 and Corr.1). The programme budget implications of that draft decision were contained in document A/C.5/44/54. The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would be submitted orally by the Chairman of that Committee.

3. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to a misprint in paragraph 30 of document A/C.5/44/54, where the figure $7,716,300 should read $7,176,300. He pointed out that the decision to hold the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to establish a preparatory committee was contained in General Assembly resolution 44/228, which provided that the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be funded from the regular budget. The resolution also provided for the establishment of a secretariat in Geneva, with a unit in New York and another in Nairobi, and for the holding of regional conferences as part of the preparatory process. The Secretary-General's estimates were, therefore, based on the pattern of the Conference as decided by the General Assembly and the Preparatory Committee.

4. The Secretary-General's estimates for the preparation and holding of the Conference amounted to $15,455,300. Of that amount, $10,481,100 related to the biennium 1990-1991 and $4,974,200 to the biennium 1992-1993.

5. With the exception of conference-servicing requirements, the largest item of expenditure related to temporary posts, for which, as indicated in paragraph 24 of document A/C.5/44/54, the estimated requirement was $8,223,300 ($5,589,100 in 1990-1991 and $2,634,200 in 1992). A total of 44 posts were requested, 20 in the Professional category and above and 24 in the General Service. The Advisory Committee found the functional descriptions of those posts to be inadequate.

6. With respect to the request for posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels, the Advisory Committee maintained that the provision of two posts at such a high level was not normal for United Nations

conferences. However, in view of the scope of the Conference, the Advisory Committee was not recommending the deletion of one of the two posts, but stressed that that provision should not be regarded as a precedent for the future.

7. The Advisory Committee was not recommending any reductions in the Professional posts requested, but pointed out that a considerable number of staff of the United Nations Environment Programme and Habitat dealt with environmental issues and that their services should be enlisted to the extent possible. Should additional staff be required, the Advisory Committee trusted that they could be found through redeployment rather than through additional recruitment.

8. The number of General Service posts requested exceeded the number of Professional posts. The Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of eight General Service posts in Geneva, which would result in savings of $1,074,800 ($733,800 in 1990-1991 and $341,000 in 1992). As a result of that reduction, the total number of General Service posts would be 36.

9. With regard to the request for temporary posts in 1992, the Advisory Committee was of the view that the assumption of an average of nine months of temporary assistance was not fully justified and recommended that a more realistic average of seven months should be applied, resulting in savings of $509,600 for 1992.

10. With regard to travel, which was shown as three separate items - official travel of staff, travel of technical staff and travel to the Conference - totalling $403,600, the Advisory Committee questioned the practicality of the estimate for official travel of staff, which was based on the assumption of multiple trips to 74 countries. It believed that many of the objectives of the programme of travel could be met more efficiently through effective liaison in Geneva, New York and Nairobi, and at regional meetings. Savings could also be achieved in respect of travel of technical staff and travel to the Conference. Consequently, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $50,000 ($35,000 for the biennium 1990-1991 and $15,000 for 1992).

11. The Secretary-General estimated that $396,100 would be needed for support services, including the acquisition and maintenance of computer and office equipment and communications. The Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $20,000 in that amount ($15,000 for the biennium 1990-1991 and $5,000 for 1992).

12. On the subject of office space, the Advisory Committee had been informed of an offer by the Government of Switzerland to provide the necessary space to accommodate the Conference secretariat in Geneva. The Advisory Committee trusted that details of the offer would be made available to it before any agreement was reached with the Government of Switzerland.

13. In paragraph 18 of the report, the Secretary-General outlined the proposed public information activities for the Conference, the cost of which was estimated at $750,000. The Advisory Committee requested that an effort be made to achieve some savings in that area through efficient implementation of the information programme.

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(Mr. Mselle)

14. Conference-servicing costs for the Conference were estimated at $5,019,800 ($3,304,800 for the biennium 1990-1991 and $1,715,000 for 1992). The Advisory Committee noted from paragraph 25 of document A/C.5/44/54 that provision had been made in the programme budget for temporary assistance requirements in 1990-1991 and that no additional resources would be required under section 29 of the budget in respect of the Conference. The requirements for 1992 would be dealt with in the proposed budget outline for the biennium 1992-1993.

15. In paragraph 20 (c), the Secretary-General outlined the documentation requirements for the Conference. The Advisory Committee drew attention in that connection to the decision adopted for the Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 to reduce the volume of documentation and emphasize the action-oriented nature of the Conference. Perhaps a similar approach could be taken for the 1992 Conference.

16. On the subject of the financing of the Conference, the Secretary-General requested, in paragraphs 27 to 31 of his report, authorization to draw on the contingency fund and explained his reasons for so doing. The Advisory Committee agreed that such additional appropriations as would be necessary should have first call on the contingency fund. However, at the current stage, the General Assembly was required only to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments and such appropriations as might be necessary would be approved by the General Assembly towards the close of the forty-fifth session on the basis of actual requirements and taking into account any savings which might materialize in the implementation of the 1990-1991 appropriations. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $6,392,500 for non-conference-servicing costs for the biennium 1990-1991. Conference-servicing costs up to $3,304,800 would be financed from section 29 of the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. In addition, an amount of up to $1,246,200 would have to be appropriated for the biennium 1990-1991 under section 31 (Staff assessment), to be offset by income in the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

17. For 1992, non-conference-servicing costs amounting to $2,388,600 and conference-servicing costs of $1,715,000 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

18. In addition to the possibility of using up to $6,392,500 for the costs of the Conference in the biennium 1990-1991, there existed potential calls on the contingency fund in significant amounts in respect of decisions already taken or to be taken by the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies. Accordingly, it was likely that most or all of the contingency fund would be needed before the end of the first year of the biennium. It would be recalled that, in paragraph 7 of resolution 43/214, the General Assembly indicated that the appropriations and adequacy of the level of the contingency fund should be reviewed in the light of the evolving situation. Subsequently, in paragraph 4 of resolution 44/200 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at

(Mr. Mselle)

its forty-sixth session, reviewing, inter alia, the use and operation of the contingency fund. The Advisory Committee recommended that the situation should be closely monitored during the forty-fifth session.

19. Mr. NASSER (Egypt) said that document A/C.5/44/54 was extremely useful but that he would appreciate some clarifications. Paragraphs 15 and 16 referred to the requirements for the work of the regional commissions, and the apparent discrepancy between the two paragraphs should be explained.

20. With regard to section C of the document dealing with the use of the contingency fund, he recalled that the Fund had been established to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. He was concerned about the effect it might have on the Fund if the amount referred to in the report were appropriated. Although it was true that the General Assembly had indicated that it would keep the level of the contingency fund under review to ensure that it was appropriate, it would probably be wise, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, to monitor the situation closely during the forty-fifth session. He asked the Secretariat for information on the current status of the contingency fund and on the balance that would remain if the proposed appropriations for the Conference were approved.

21. Document A/C.5/44/54 was based on the assumption that the Conference would be held in Geneva, even though the consensus had been that it should be held in Brazil. He asked why estimates had not been prepared on the basis of that consensus.

22. Lastly, he was concerned about the failure to give functional descriptions of the posts that the Secretary-General was proposing for the Conference, and asked the Secretariat to explain that omission.

23. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said that when the programme budget implications contained in document A/C.5/44/54 had been calculated, the mandate established by the General Assembly in resolution 44/228 for the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had not been properly taken into account. Paragraph 6 (d) described the work to be done in the preparations for the Conference by the New York and Nairobi secretariat units. The work as described did not conform to the mandate given to those secretariats in resolution 44/228, which was broader than simply maintaining contacts. Also, there did not seem to be enough Professional staff assigned to those units to carry out the mandate under resolution 44/228.

24. With regard to the regional meetings in preparation for the Conference, the requirement given in paragraph 15 of document A/C.5/44/54 did not seem large enough to enable the regional commissions to carry out the mandates assigned to them in resolution 44/228. As to public information, Uganda believed that the cost of publishing the illustrated brochure referred to in paragraph 18 (c) of document A/C.5/44/54 was not justified.

(Mr. Etuket, Uganda)

25. Uganda believed, like the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, that it was for the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session to approve the necessary appropriations for all Conference-related activities on the basis of actual requirements. It was not proper to authorize expenditures now based solely on estimates. The possibility of covering the cost of Conference-related activities from extra-budgetary resources should be examined further. Resorting to the contingency fund did not seem to be the appropriate solution under the circumstances.

26. Mr. MORENO FERNANDEZ (Cuba) said that parts of document A/C.5/44/54 required clarification from the Secretariat. Paragraph 6 (a) proposed that the staff of the Geneva secretariat should include one Under-Secretary-General post and one Assistant Secretary-General post. Those posts were not necessary, and to propose them contradicted the spirit of General Assembly resolution 41/213 on the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. Nor did the staff assignments for the Conference secretariat indicated in paragraph 6 (b) seem justified. Consideration should be given to the role that would be played in the preparations for the Conference by bodies such as the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA).

27. Paragraph 9 of document A/C.5/44/54 stated that 36 work-months of consultants would be required during the preparations for the Conference. The current practice of hiring the fewest possible consultants ought to be respected, and Cuba would therefore like detailed information on the specific tasks to be performed by the consultants in question.

28. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) said that document A/C.5/44/54 did not sufficiently emphasize the use of resources available within the United Nations system, even though General Assembly resolution 44/228 requested organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to contribute fully to the preparations of the Conference. Accordingly, document A/C.5/44/54 should be revised with a view to making fuller use of the resources available within the United Nations system in the areas of environment and development.

29. The work of the New York and Nairobi secretariats as envisaged in document A/C.5/44/54, paragraph 6 (d) did not exactly correspond to their unquestionably much broader mandate under General Assembly resolution 44/228. Also, the Secretariat should give further details on the estimated cost of holding the regional meetings mentioned in paragraphs 15 and 16 of that document.

30. Public information with a view to enhancing public awareness was very important. Nevertheless, the appropriations for public information activities seemed excessive, and he wondered if the amount could be reduced.

31. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee recommendation with regard to the contingency fund, in the expectation that revised programme budget implications would be submitted to the General Assembly at its next session. It should be borne

(Mr. Elghouayel, Tunisia)

in mind that the number of States participating in the Conference was greater than the number of States Members of the United Nations. Thought should therefore be given to ways of having the participating States which were not United Nations members contribute financially to the Conference, for it was obvious that the contingency fund served solely to finance activities of the Organization. His delegation would like information about the financing of the Preparatory Committee's budget in relation to its membership. Since the majority of States had supported the Conference, perhaps a pledging conference should be organized to reduce the burden on the regular United Nations budget and specifically on the contingency fund.

32. Mrs. SHITAKHA (Kenya) said, with reference to paragraph 9 of document A/C.5/44/54, that perhaps so many outside consultants were unnecessary, since there were bodies like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and DIESA whose staff were perfectly competent to prepare the background documents.

33. Her delegation agreed completely with the representative of Uganda regarding the functional description of posts. She too was concerned about paragraph 6 (d), which barely referred to the duties of the New York and Nairobi staff and in a way that did not fully reflect the mandates established in General Assembly resolution 44/228. She wondered if there were enough staff to carry out those mandates, especially in the case of Nairobi, where UNEP would have an essential role to play in the Conference. She therefore hoped that consideration would be given to the possibility of redistributing staff to Nairobi and New York, in view of the fact that Geneva was overstaffed.

34. The Secretariat ought to clarify the term "contributions" in paragraph 6 (b), indicating whether it meant documents or staff assignments from UNEP and other bodies. Since it was common knowledge that the UNEP manning table had been severely reduced, secondment would not be advisable. It was precisely the time to strengthen UNEP, rather than put further strain on its manning table.

35. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the committees should carry out their functions strictly according to their mandates and should not interfere in areas which were not within their competence. If a committee had been assigned certain tasks relating to a programme on environment and development, the decisions it adopted must refer to the substance of that programme only, not its implementation. Otherwise, the work of the Fifth Committee, for example, would be meaningless, or there would be a repetition of tasks. In that connection, it should be noted that even though a decision had already been taken to establish a secretariat with its own units for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations Secretariat had formulated a set of proposals for the establishment of parallel administrative and programming units.

36. Since the Conference would be taking up questions relating to the environment and development, it was logical to assign functions to Geneva and New York (which dealt with development) and to Nairobi (which dealt with the environment). The various functions would have to be reorganized so that Nairobi could play the

(Mr. Dankwa, Ghana)

prominent role that was its due. Moreover, outside assistance should be used only in order to supplement the work carried out by those three centres.

37. The Conference should be co-ordinated by its secretariat only, and, for that reason, it seemed redundant to assign that task to a Secretary-General of the Conference - who was a representative of the Secretary-General - and a Deputy to the Secretary-General.

38. In view of those problems, his delegation would be unable to support the programme budget implications as currently formulated. Consequently, it agreed with those delegations which had requested a revision of the implications, taking into account the capacities of New York, Geneva and Nairobi. In that respect, setting up special units entailed the risk of establishing a permanent secretariat in Geneva to which environmental responsibilities currently exercised by Nairobi would be transferred. That could be avoided if the Organization's resources were utilized. Moreover, the recruitment of temporary assistance staff was not advisable, since they would leave the Organization after acquiring a great deal of experience. Rather, it would be better to provide an opportunity for permanent staff to acquire such experience, which, ultimately, would be of great value to the Organization.

39. If the programme budget implications could not be revised, they should be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

40. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia) supported the recommendation made by the Chairman of the ACABQ that the General Assembly should approve the appropriations at the end of its forty-fifth session.

41. Referring to paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/44/54, he said that the structure and staffing of the Conference secretariat seemed disproportionate. As the representative of Uganda had indicated, it created the risk of establishing a permanent secretariat in Geneva. Moreover, according to paragraphs 6 (b) and (d), there would be two centres (New York and Geneva) which would maintain contacts with UNEP. That would undoubtedly result in a duplication of tasks.

42. With respect to staffing, it was not necessary for the Conference to have two high-level officials, since that would be contrary to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213.

43. As the Chairman of ACABQ had indicated, the resources of the contingency fund would be used up before the first year of the biennium was over. Therefore, the status of the fund should be examined immediately, without waiting until the forty-sixth session.

44. In conclusion, his delegation wished to know if consultations had been held between UNEP and the Secretariat on the qualifications of the staff to be seconded to UNEP.

45. Mr. CONMY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States Members of the European Community, said that the total cost of the preparatory phase of the Conference on Environment and Development was substantial. In document A/C.5/44/54, an additional appropriation of $7.17 million from the contingency fund was proposed for the biennium 1990-1991. That represented more than half of the total resources remaining in the fund for the biennium 1990-1991.

46. While conference-servicing costs of $3.3 million would be absorbed within existing appropriations, it was regrettable that the Secretariat had not identified other areas, including non-programmed expenditure, in which the additional costs might be absorbed. Existing equipment should be used and some savings could be realized if the sums proposed for computers and other equipment, in particular, were eliminated and travel allocations were reduced. The number of posts and their functions should have been justified in greater detail in the statement of programme budget implications. The Bergen Regional Conference had been funded from extrabudgetary resources and it might be possible to draw on additional extrabudgetary resources in order to defray the costs of the preparatory process. If the receipt of voluntary contributions made it possible to reduce appropriations, the General Assembly should be so informed at its forty-fifth session. The Secretary-General's intention to address requirements for 1992 in the context of the programme budget outline was welcome. In that respect, the overall level of resources should not be increased, but rather the environment should be considered as a priority issue during the biennium 1992-1993.

47. In conclusion, the Twelve States Members of the European Community accepted the programme budget implications as amended by ACABQ. The objective was to improve the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations so that it could carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Member States in accordance with the Charter.

48. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the importance of the Conference on Environment and Development was beyond question and that, consequently, it was also very important to organize the Conference preparatory process effectively. As implementation of the process would entail the establishment of a secretariat in Geneva and two liaison offices in New York and Nairobi, and the holding of regional meetings, sufficient resources must be available.

49. The delegations of the Nordic countries recognized that the costs indicated in document A/C.5/44/54 might appear relatively high but were in overall agreement with the Secretary-General's proposal for estimated expenditures. At the same time, they agreed that there might be room for some savings and, in that respect, they were prepared to accept the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. None the less, with respect to the Advisory Committee's recommendation to recost the temporary posts in 1992, the Nordic countries took it that the reduction figure proposed in that connection was merely a recommendation, which should be reconsidered in the context of the preparation of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

(Ms. Mustonen, Finland)

50. Lastly, they agreed with the procedures suggested by the Secretary-General for financing the preparatory process and drawing the necessary resources from the contingency fund, as stated in paragraphs 29 and 30 of his report (A/C.5/44/54). The Nordic countries supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on how to appropriate those resources.

51. Speaking on behalf of Finland only, she said that with respect to the use, operation and adequacy of the contingency fund, her delegation noted with concern the reference by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to the possibility that most or all of the contingency fund would be needed prior to the end of the first year of the biennium. On a number of occasions, Finland had emphasized, during the relevant discussions in the Fifth Committee, that experience with the new budget procedures was needed before finalizing the budget process as adopted in resolution 41/213. Her delegation therefore concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the situation with respect to the use and operation of the contingency fund should be closely monitored during the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

52. Mrs. BERENGUER (Brazil) said that her Government attached great importance to the Conference it would be hosting in 1992 and to its preparatory process. It therefore believed that all necessary resources must be made available to the secretariat of the Conference so that it could fulfil the role assigned to it in resolution 44/228 and in the draft decision contained in the report of the Preparatory Committee.

53. While appreciating the efforts made by the Secretariat in producing document A/C.5/44/54, her delegation was of the view that the activities outlined in paragraph 6 could have been set out in a way that better reflected the decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee. She agreed with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee that the functional descriptions of the posts to be created were inadequate.

54. Under paragraph (f) of the Preparatory Committee's draft decision, the General Assembly would request the Conference secretariat to take measures providing for the active contribution by non-governmental organizations to the preparatory process and the Conference in accordance with the guidelines to be established by the Preparatory Committee. Paragraph 6 of document A/C.5/44/54, on the other hand, stated that the secretariat to be established in Geneva would co-ordinate the inputs from the various organizations and act as a focal point for the organizations. Such drafting was inadequate in that it could be construed as prejudging the decision to be made by the Preparatory Committee on the arrangements for the participation of the non-governmental organizations. Given the great potential value of such inputs, her delegation believed that the Preparatory Committee's decisions and guidelines should be fully taken into account at every stage, so that those inputs might be adequately channelled into the process.

55. The staffing table proposed for the New York unit fell short of the activities envisaged for it by the Preparatory Committee. It was also stated in the Advisory Committee's report that a limited number of staff would have to carry out a great

(Mrs. Berenguer, Brazil)

variety of tasks. The first - maintaining contacts with the permanent missions - would in itself involve a substantial amount of work, especially as all Member States were represented in New York. That unit would likewise have to ensure liaison with United Nations organizations and departments and with various agencies in New York and Washington and would have to provide support for such meetings of the Bureau as might be held in New York. Accordingly, the provisions for human resources seemed unrealistic.

56. With regard to the budget estimates for the holding of two sessions of an open-ended legal working group in Geneva (A/C.5/44/54, para. 14), she pointed out that the Preparatory Committee had not decided on the holding of any session. What the Preparatory Committee had decided had been to "deal ... with legal, institutional and all related matters in an open-ended working group to be set up at an appropriate time". It was therefore premature to appropriate resources for that purpose at the present stage. Should the Preparatory Committee adopt a decision in the near future, it could be taken up at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

57. The public information activities provided for in paragraphs 17 and 18 certainly merited consideration by the Preparatory Committee, particularly as regarded the contents of the products, so that the substantive issues were kept within a proper perspective. In the outline of the thrust of the programme, in paragraph 17, the environment was mentioned four times and development only once. Why not say, for example, "mobilizing support for strengthened environmental and developmental policies" and not just "environmental policies"?

58. Her delegation also questioned the allocation of resources for the public information programme (A/C.5/44/54, para. 24). Two thirds of the resources were destined for the biennium 1990-1991 and only one third for 1992, the year of the Conference. In the estimates submitted to the Preparatory Committee, $300,000 had been foreseen for the biennium 1990-1991 and $450,000 for 1992. That would maintain the necessary balance, as a greater volume of resources ought to be reserved for the holding of the Conference itself.

59. It was her understanding that the point of the current meeting of the Fifth Committee, in accordance with approved budgetary procedures, was to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments, under the budget for the biennium 1990-1991, within the contingency fund, to ensure adequate Secretariat support for the preparatory process of the Conference on Environment and Development. Her delegation agreed that resources from the contingency fund should be allocated for the preparatory process of the Conference.

60. In conclusion, she reiterated that the Brazilian Government was looking forward to hosting the 1992 Conference. It had already taken steps with respect to the relevant organizational and administrative aspects both domestically - which included, of course, determination of the city where the Conference was to be held - and externally, initiating the necessary arrangements with the United Nations Secretariat.

61. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he agreed with the Advisory Committee that the human and financial resources that the Secretariat had requested for the holding of the Conference were excessive, although that did not mean that he was unaware of the priority that should be accorded it. He fully supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the financial implications should be reduced in such areas as General Service staff, travel, conference services and computer equipment.

62. The Advisory Committee had acted too liberally with regard to the resources requested by the Secretariat, particularly in respect of Professional staff. It was regrettable that, in preparing its estimates, the Secretariat had not taken into account the staff already working on issues related to the environment, both in the Secretariat and in the specialized agencies. He hoped that, in the future, the Secretariat would take a broader view of the United Nations system when adopting decisions of that kind.

63. With regard to the Advisory Committee's report, he said, firstly, that although he fully concurred with the Committee's opinion that the posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General levels were not necessary from the technical point of view, he agreed that they should be retained because of the tremendous political significance of the Conference. However, he insisted that, in the decision adopted by the Fifth Committee on the financing of the Conference, it should be stated that approval of those two high-level posts should not in any way be regarded as a precedent for future conferences.

64. Secondly, the Swiss Government had generously offered to provide accommodation for the Conference secretariat free of charge, although the United Nations was currently faced with an office space crisis in Geneva. It had been proposed that various temporary premises currently occupied by Secretariat personnel should be used as offices and also that additional premises should be constructed with funding from the regular budget of the United Nations. In such circumstances, the generous offer by the Swiss Government merited the Fifth Committee's profound gratitude. Accordingly, in the decision adopted by the Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft decision contained in the Preparatory Committee's report, it should express gratitude for the generous contribution of the Swiss Government and take into account also the comments of the Advisory Committee on the subject.

65. In the Committee's decision, it might also be stated that, if, as a result of the work done by the Conference, it was considered necessary to establish a new secretariat department to deal with issues relating to the environment, the problem of the premises to be occupied by such department would be the subject of a decision by the General Assembly, in which account would be taken of the existence at other offices, such as Nairobi or Vienna, of offices and premises that were not fully utilized.

66. Subject to the points that it had made, the USSR delegation was prepared to accept the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning human and financial resources for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

67. Mr. GUPTA (India) said that the issues referred to in General Assembly resolution 44/228 which were of most direct concern to his country were those relating to the environment and development; access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technologies; and human and financial resources needed to implement the decisions adopted at the Conference. That, of course, did not diminish the importance of legal issues or those relating to the protection of the environment.

68. There were already a number of units within the United Nations system that dealt with development issues, primarily at United Nations Headquarters in New York; they were the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and the Centre for Science and Technology for Development; in Nairobi those issues were dealt with by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). According to document A/CONF.151/PC/2/Add.1 the work of the Secretariat in New York would focus on socio-economic and environmental aspects of development, as well as on technology, finance and institutions. In order to carry out the process recommended by the Preparatory Committee therefore the proposal was to establish one D-1 and two P-4 posts at Headquarters in New York, one D-1 and one P-4 post in Nairobi and 15 Professional posts in Geneva. His delegation wondered, as the delegation of Uganda and others had also wondered, what would be the duties of the staff in those posts, bearing in mind the fact that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had acknowledged that the job description was inadequate. The answer was not to be found in the documents before the Committee. That was a serious matter given the hopes which his country and other developing countries were placing in the outcome of the Conference. He therefore asked the Secretariat for clarification.

69. He would also like to have a clearer picture of how the task of co-ordinating the work of all the bodies and units which were to participate in the preparatory process and in the conference itself was to be approached; the documentation submitted contained no specific details of how that co-ordination was to be achieved.

70. Finally, while he did not wish to enter into a detailed analysis of the aspects relating to the cost estimates, since the Advisory Committee had already provided the necessary details, he pointed out that in the statement made by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee reference had been made to the demands which would be made on the contingency fund and he suggested that consideration should be given to the level of the fund, as had been suggested in paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 43/214.

71. Mr. GROSSMAN (United States of America) said that his delegation fully supported the proposals made by the Secretary-General of the Conference, as amended in the report of the Advisory Committee. Nevertheless, it questioned the imbalance between the number of General Service and Professional posts, and the proposal that there should be both an Under-Secretary-General and an Assistant-Secretary-General. He welcomed the Advisory Committee's suggestion that posts

(Mr. Grossman, United States)

should be transferred from UNEP and Habitat to the secretariat of the conference, and also the suggestion that additional requirements should be met through redeployment instead of through additional recruitment.

72. His delegation was also concerned about the proposed costs and amount of travel and the need to buy computers and office equipment. With regard to the latter item, perhaps its would be possible to lease computers for the duration of the Conference.

73. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller), replying to questions raised by representatives, said that the Committee had before it document A/C.5/44/54, which the General Assembly would consider in plenary, and document A/44/48. It would be necessary to add the programme budget implications of resolution 44/228, which had been adopted the previous year on the basis of a very brief statement contained in paragraph 2 of document A/C.5/44/54. Member States had expressed their political will twice: first in 1989, in adopting resolution 44/228, and again now in adopting the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which the General Assembly would consider in plenary. Accordingly, the process merely needed information on the Fifth Committee's views on the matter.

74. In adopting resolution 44/228 a number of decisions had been taken: to convene the Conference, to establish a Preparatory Committee which would hold a two-week session and to establish a secretariat at Geneva, with a unit in New York and another unit in Nairobi. It had further been decided that the secretariat should be headed by a Secretary-General of the Conference who would be appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and that the latter should prepare a report containing recommendations on an adequate preparatory process.

75. It had also been decided that the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be funded through the regular budget of the United Nations without adversely affecting other ongoing activities and without prejudice to the provision of sources of extrabudgetary resources. It had further been decided (paragraph 15 of the resolution) that a voluntary fund should be established for the purpose of supporting developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, in participating fully and effectively in the Conference.

76. The Secretary-General had submitted the requested proposals and the Preparatory Committee had considered them. The difference between those documents and the programme budget implications currently before the Fifth Committee reflected the changes made as a result of decisions taken by the Preparatory Committee.

77. The statement contained in document A/C.5/44/54 supplemented the report of the Preparatory Committee and contained the text of the decision which the General Assembly would adopt taking into consideration the views of the Fifth Committee.

78. In paragraph 55 of its report, the Preparatory Committee had recommended a draft decision on the secretariat for the Conference; that decision had been

adopted 10 days prior to the current session. An organization of work of the Preparatory Committee had also been drawn up - it was contained in paragraph 56 of the report - in which reference was also made to working groups.

79. Document A/44/48 also contained decision I concerning secretariat support and related arrangements and regional contributions to the preparatory process, and a decision on the establishment and operations of the voluntary fund. The General Assembly's attention was also drawn to a decision on the role of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process.

80. The document also contained decision V on guidelines concerning the contributions of the United Nations Environment Programme, other organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental organizations to the preparations for the Conference. The decision inter alia requested the Preparatory Committee to identify at an early stage of its work the participation of such organizations. The statement on programme budget implications reflected the importance of the interactive nature of the preparatory process, which was referred to in paragraphs (c) and (f) of decision V.

81. Replying to the question raised by the delegation of Egypt, concerning the contingency fund, he said that if the Fifth Committee were to approve the programme budget implications contained in document A/C.5/44/54, the Secretary-General would be authorized to make commitments from the contingency fund in respect of the estimates in that document. However, the final decision on costs would be adopted at the end of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, on the basis of a report which the Secretary-General would submit to the Assembly showing the real cost estimates for 1990 and the updated estimates for 1991.

82. With respect to the possibility of using human resources already available within the United Nations system for some of the preparatory work of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, he said that the Secretary-General had taken that possibility very much into account and that available resources would be used as much as possible provided that that did not mean sacrificing any of the ongoing programmes or activities.

83. In reply to the question raised by the delegation of Tunisia concerning the share of the Conference costs to be paid by States which were not members of the United Nations that participated in the Conference, he said that non-member States would have to pay a pro rata part of the costs of the Conference and of preparations for the Conference. Those amounts would be refunded to Member States whose contributions would thus be reduced.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.